

**PLANNING COMMISSION – SPECIAL SESSION  
COMMISSIONER’S HEARING ROOM, COUPEVILLE, WA  
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2014**

	<i>Members Present</i>	<i>Members Absent</i>
<i>District 1</i>	<i>Val Hillers – Chair</i>	
	<i>Dean Enell</i>	
	<i>Mike Joselyn – Vice Chair</i>	
<i>District 2</i>		<i>Jeffery Wallin</i>
		<i>George Saul</i>
		<i>Leal Dickson</i>
<i>District 3</i>	<i>Wayne Havens</i>	
	<i>Beth Munson</i>	
		<i>Scott Yonkman</i>

Meeting was called to order at 9:02 a.m. by Chair Hillers.

**ROLL CALL**

Mike Joselyn, Wayne Havens, Val Hillers, Beth Munson, Dean Enell

**Minutes:**

October 28, 2014

*Commissioner Joselyn moved to approve the minutes as written, Commissioner Havens seconded, motion carried unanimously.*

Planning staff present: Dave Wechner – Planning Director, Brad Johnson - Long Range Planner, Amanda Almgren – Long Range Planner, Will Simpson – Long Range Planner

**ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC**

NONE

**DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Director Wechner discussed the following items in the Director’s Report:

- Introduced Janet Wright, Current Use Planner.
- Informed the Planning Commission of the new current use planning positions approved by the Board. Part of the strategy is to supplement some of the work the long range planning team is doing with current planning. The Board will be asked for another long range planner to help with the Comp Plan effort.
- Growth Management Act Comp Plan Update Website is being created to allow for more public involvement.
- Hearing Examiner Request for Proposal and will be adding an option of a Hearing Examiner Pro-Tem.
- Presentation Clinton Community Council about the Comp Plan Update and this allows opportunity for public participation. They will also be doing the same presentation on Camano Island.

Commissioner Enell asked Director Wechner what the public is more concerned about with this Comp Plan Update.

Director Wechner responded to Commissioner Enell's question explaining the concerns presented:

- Natural constraints the community has.
- Groundwater.
- Failing septic systems, the density of homes along the shoreline with failing septic systems.
- Island Transit/Transportation Elements.
- Navy training operations.
- Potential for development for larger lot sizes in the rural areas.

Commissioner Hillers asked Dave how the Planning Department is obtaining the public's feedback.

Dave responded to Commissioner Hillers stating the Comp Plan Updated is just being presented to the public and the answers are anecdotal comments he is hearing.

Commissioner Enell asked what Clinton's interest in the Comp Plan is and what would they like to see.

Dave said some of their interests are focused on Clinton as a RAID and its designation of certain properties for commercial use and how it might shape their community. They are also dealing with some topography issues, transportation options and solutions.

Commissioner Enell stated a number of years ago they considered with Clinton the possibility of becoming a UGA and was there a resurface of that topic.

Mr. Wechner responded there was no mention of it in the meeting he attended.

Commissioner Havens asked about the developments constructed in the 1920's and 1930's, that encompass their entire lots on the beach and their septic fails what solution do they have to repair or install new systems.

Dave stated the property owners do have options. Most of those options are expensive and if the Planning Commission would like he can have Health Department speak to them on that issue. They would have to redesign the system to a pressurized system or go to an offsite location. In terms of a long-term solution, Health and through the Comp Plan effort needs to come up with the solution.

Further discussion regarding septic systems continued.

**PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOP - Continued discussion on the revised Countywide Planning Policies.**

Brad Johnson presented the Countywide Planning Policies and introduced the Planning Commission to the first survey. The Countywide Planning Policies are a framework that describes how the Comp Plans of both the county and the cities within Island County come together and are intended to resolve issues of inter-governmental coordination and overlapping jurisdiction. Staff has been hard at work with those jurisdictions developing the update to the Countywide Planning Policies. The old Countywide Planning Policies had left considerable uncertainties and a number of important processes, most importantly the process used to expand urban growth areas or review population projections. Under State law, the County is required to update the Comprehensive Plan on a periodic basis and assess the population growth figures and size of the UGAs. In order to avoid future disputes and to save time, money and headaches, the endeavor was made to frame as specific as possible a set of instructions for all of the jurisdictions to use in updating their comprehensive plans and determine how to size UGAs.

The Countywide Policies are divided into four broad sections:

- General Provisions Section.
- Goals.
- Policies, divided into other subsections.
- Administrative Section.
- Appendix.

Commissioner Hillers commented the process being used in the municipalities must be working well and was please that items that have been contentious in prior years seem not to be contentious now.

Brad informed the Planning Commissioners the City of Oak Harbor will be holding a public hearing very soon.

Commissioners raised the following topics to discuss:

- Freeland and proposed housing units may not support the growth projected.
- Growth in South Whidbey.
- Goals of the GMA.
- Population growth, declining school enrollment.
- Provisions included allowing changes to assess the capacity in Urban Growth Areas and make adjustments. Provisions to identify areas outside of Urban Growth Areas as potential expansion to the Urban Growth Areas.
- Staff stated the capacity proposed is based on what has happened in the past projections and the status quo. In the future there will be a decision brought to the Planning Commission whether or not steps should be taken to increase the percentage of growth that is occurring in the Urban Growth Areas. Staff would like to address the subject for each of the Planning Areas realizing they are different.

- How were vacancy rates and second homes taken into consideration? Due to the rural figures not being a capacity assessment, they are an impact analysis of what would occur if all lots in the rural areas were built out.
- GMA mandate is to provide adequate housing in the UGA for the population that is expected to occur. Items not discussed are vacation homes, second homes, and similar items.
- Additional housing units needed – the figures are too low. It should be more of a goal directed number to achieve the type of balance needed to comply with the goals of the Growth Management Act.
- Are rural areas minimum lot sizes being increased? Staff responded there is not clear direction on the subject.
- Legacies of land issues that are becoming apparent:
  - Water resources.
  - Critical area concerns and restrictions.
  - Requirement to shift growth to Urban Growth Areas.
- If the Rural zone is increased above 5 acres, it has become way more land than a person wants and is wasteland, gas to mow the land, and takes farmland out of production.
- Water system policies are out of date.
- What tools are being used to determine how much water is available? Staff is working closely with the County geo hydrologist during the update.

Will Simpson informed the Planning Commission there will be a future date for a public hearing on the policies. The Council of Governments will also be briefed on the work on November 26, 2014. Each of the jurisdictions are collectively going to their planning advisory boards and elected officials also. In terms of the presented document there does not seem to be many changes.

Commissioner Munson asked if the new website will allow the public to sign up and get updates.

Staff responded there is currently a location on the website that allows public involvement.

### **Discussion on public outreach techniques and draft survey questions.**

Amanda Almgren informed the Planning Commission of the preparation of materials and process for developing the Comprehensive Plan Website.

- Discussed the initial survey which will demonstrate where the public has concerns and where resources need to be focused in the future.
- The survey will be distributed online through Survey Monkey. It will be advertised along with the Comp Plan Website.
- Commissioners asked how the public will be motivated to access the survey online.

The topic of public outreach was further discussed.

- Public meetings.
- Notices to public.

Will stated this would be one of many avenues that staff will engage with the public. Only a certain demographic attends those kinds of meetings.

Staff further explained the constraints they will come across in receiving comments.

Amanda presented the survey questions to the Planning Commissioners.

Commissioners asked staff to make the following changes/clarifications to the survey questions:

- Commissioner Hillers asked for clearer wording. Need to capture the items resonating with the public in terms of the items listed.
- Commissioner Munson asked to include if a person owns or rents. This would be useful to determine if owners have different priorities than renters.
- Commissioner Enell recommended the survey should also ask what three things should be changed in their geographic area.
- Begin with general information of the Comprehensive Plan Update.

Staff notified Planning Commission the intent of additional surveys being created for more public involvement in the future.

Discussion regarding the launch of the new website and further clarification of questions continued.

Commissioner Enell had some questions regarding the proposed NMUGA boundary. He thinks it is a very good idea but the nuts and bolts of where the boundary shows some concerns.

Brad Johnson responded to Commissioner Enell by reminding the Planning Commission and the public, the Freeland UGA boundary that was shown on the maps was just for study purposes and it was only to find out if the Freeland UGA can be reduced and still have capacity for the anticipated urban growth. There has not been an attempt to draw the line exactly where it should be. Through the UGA analysis step described, the changed would occur in early 2015, which is when the lines would be added to the maps and be brought to the Planning Commission.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

*Steve Erickson, Box 53, Langley*

Whidbey Environmental Action Network

Mr. Erickson discussed the survey and made comments.

- The assumption needs to be made in the survey, if the objective is to capture people who are not part of the people who are aware of the process, know what it is, feel very strongly about an issue, the survey needs to be designed with that in mind.
- The general demographic data is done that way.
- Community priorities, he suggests instead of using Island County, replace with Whidbey and Camano Island.

- In terms of question number 8, it would be better to use a scale ranging from not important at all, somewhat important, neutral, somewhat important, and very important.
- Each time a person takes the survey try to randomize the order of the choices.

#### Countywide Planning Policies

- Quite a lot of the policies are excellent and a vast improvement.
- Lands of local significance - having this in place from the beginning is a good idea.
- Page 12 8d – talks about when the UGA be generally enlarged or modified outside of the regular update process. In opportunities presented through large scale business industry, institution or other significant economic opportunities to Island County and the County municipality agrees there is no suitable land available inside the current UGA, there needs to be some kind of caveat there has to be some kind of commitment from that entity before or the change is contingent on that actually happening. He suggests there should be some sort of binding contract with the entity.
- Page 13 under item 4 – in those situations it looks like leap frog development or a satellite UGA that is not connected or an intervening area that is not being served by the urban services. Those kinds of situations are always messy. There needs to be a way of dealing with those situations by including some kind of requirement that the UGA still has to be contiguous.

*Lou Malzone, 5428 Pleasant View Lane, Freeland*

#### Freeland Water Sewer District

- He wanted to reinforce what Steve Erickson said about the leapfrogging. As a Water District Commissioner they currently have two instances now where one water district has bought a smaller water district, there were contracts involved and the Freeland Water Sewer District rules supersede the other water district rules. There are problems that may be incurred over time; it is almost impossible to have a conversation with the new owner who wants to do something who is now governed by other rules. Where there is a contiguous UGA with one set of rules it is much easier to administer over time.
- Survey Question number 9 perhaps should say, Island County's growth is expected to be 4.4% per year for the next 20 years. To say Island County has experienced slow growth does not tell what is being communicated.
- The Freeland Water Sewer District is going to advocate for a smaller UGA. The study map is just the study map and realizes there is a lot of work that needs to go into it. What the Freeland Sewer and Water District would like to see is something along the lines of the study area and an orderly annexation process. If 61 housing units are needed for both the current UGA and the study map UGA to allocate both population based on the elected numbers and employment growth there is no reason to establish a goal. To increase the units would create more challenges and expenses.
- 33% of the property in Freeland is vacant because of sewer issues.

*Emyle Malzone, 5428 Pleasant View Lane, Freeland*

- Ms. Malzone had one comment regarding question number 8 of the survey which she stated was better addressed by Steve Erickson by having a range. She was going to suggest compressing it into four categories due to some of the topics being so closely related.

Brad Johnson addressed Mr. Malzone and Mr. Erickson's comments regarding the provisions for the sewer and water. One thing to keep in mind is that these policies are a framework for each of the jurisdictions to fill in the details. In drafting these policies there was careful thought in over stepping the County's authority to allow the other jurisdictions to write their own specific waiver regulations. Other jurisdictions he is familiar with, the waiver regulations are strict.

*Commissioner Enell moved to adjourn, Commissioner Munson seconded, motion carried unanimously.*

Meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Virginia Shaddy